

Last Fall, my daughter came to me with a worried look. She had heard that the government may stop young people from working on farms. She asked me, "Dad, does this mean I can't detassel anymore?"

For some time, it appeared that youth involvement in detasseling and other types of farm work could be curtailed by a series of proposed Department of Labor (DoL) rules. Late last week, we in the Heartland received the welcome news that DoL would be abandoning plans to enact these rules, citing the serious concerns it had heard from families across the country.

This was a great win for agriculture - and common sense. To many people in rural America, the new rules were cause for bewilderment, set against the natural operations of farm life and traditions of rural living as they were. They went as far as preventing those under 16 from working on farms not owned by their parents and potentially denying young people the opportunity to work in important summer jobs like detasseling, a rite of passage for thousands of Nebraska teenagers.

I introduced legislation that created an exemption for detasseling should the rules go into effect; I'm glad we won't have to take that approach. In the meantime, many people across the country took the time to share their concerns directly with the DoL and their representatives in Congress. The feedback helped persuade DoL to reverse course. In its announcement, Labor officials cited "thousands of comments expressing concerns about the effect of the proposed rules on small family-owned farms."

For generations, Nebraskans have handed down the values of hard work and personal responsibility on the family farm. While it is important to help ensure worker safety in all circumstances, uninformed edicts from Washington have no place impeding these important traditions and denying young people good employment opportunities. Fortunately, rural voices were heard, and cooler heads prevailed in Washington.

*To view a Nebraskan's perspective on the development regarding Department of Labor farm*

*work rules, please [click here](#) .[] Lori Sloup helps manage a local business that employs young Nebraskans as detassellers.*

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